

audit. A Model Citizens' Charter has also been drawn and circulated to States/UTs for adoption.

(c) and (d) No such proposal to replace the PDS is under consideration at present. However, the Government has launched many schemes, including employment generating schemes, for the welfare of the poor.

Attacks on Indian Fishermen

*175. SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken up the matter regarding the repeated attacks on the Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy, with the Government of Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what actions have been taken or is proposed to be taken to prevent such type of atrocities by Sri Lankan Navy?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) to (c) Government take up every reported incident of shooting of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy with the Government of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lanka Government has denied involvement of its Navy in a large majority of cases. The issue was also brought up during the visit of the President of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, in February 2001. The Sri Lankan Government have assured Government of India that their forces are under instructions to exercise maximum restraint in dealing with Indian fishermen found in Sri Lankan waters.

Improvement of PDS

†*176. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene being distributed per unit under Public Distribution System and the categories to whom the said items are being provided at present;

(b) whether Government have formulated any scheme to improve Public Distribution System;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) The quantities of wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene allotted under the Public Distribution System are as below:-

(i) *Wheat and Rice:* Families living below the poverty line (BPL) are provided 25 Kgs. of foodgrains per family per month under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). No fixed scale is prescribed with regard to the APL category.

(ii) *Levy Sugar:* With effect from 1.2.2001, the allocation of levy sugar under PDS is restricted to the BPL population, except in NE States, Hill States and Island territories where levy sugar is allocated to the entire population. The minimum per capita allocation of sugar is 500 gms per month in all States/UTs except in the NE States, Hill States and Island territories where the norm is 700 gms per head per month.

(iii) *Superior Kerosene Oil (SKO):* The allocation of superior kerosene oil for distribution under the PDS to different States/UTs is made on historical basis, i.e., last year's allocation plus additional allocation out of the increase given at the national level based on the principle of giving higher increase to the States with lower per capita availability so as to reduce the inter-state disparity. The manner of distribution of kerosene oil to the beneficiaries within each State/UT is decided by the concerned State Government/UT Administration.

(b) to (d) The PDS is the joint responsibility of the Central Government and the State Governments/UT Administrations. The Central Government is responsible for procuring, storing and transporting PDS commodities upto the central godowns and making them available to the States/UTs. Actual distribution of PDS commodities through Fair Price Shops is the responsibility of the State Governments/UT Administrations.

To streamline the functioning of the PDS and to make it more accountable and effective, the Central Government has issued the PDS (Control) Order, 2001 under section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. The salient features of the Order relate to proper identification of eligible families, issue of ration cards, licensing of fair price shops, scale of issue and issue prices, distribution of essential commodities and monitoring. Any contravention of

[29 November, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

the provisions of clauses 3, 4, 6 and 7 of the Order is liable for criminal punishment under section 7 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

The Government has advised the State Governments/UT Administrations to involve the Gram Panchayats more substantially in the supervision and monitoring of the PDS, especially at the FPS level, as a measure of social audit.

A Model Citizen's Charter has been drawn and circulated to States/UTs for adoption.

Next SAARC Summit

*177. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether two-day third special session of the standing committee of the foreign secretaries of seven SAARC nations concluded its deliberations on 10th August, 2001, without reaching any agreement on the next summit meeting;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the committee could not endorse Nepal's suggestion to hold the 11th summit in Kathmandu from December 28 to 30, 2001;

(d) if so, whether any dates have been fixed; and

(e) if not, by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) The Third special Session of the Standing Committee of Foreign Secretaries of SAARC nations was held in Colombo on 9th and 10th August, 2001. Nepal as host to the next SAARC Summit had proposed the dates of December 28, 29, 30, 2001 for the 11th Summit to be held in Kathmandu. The Standing Committee members agreed to consult with their respective governments on the proposal.

(b) Not applicable.

(c) The Committee agreed to carry out consultations to seek the convenience of all member heads of State/Govt. to finalize the dates for the next Summit.

(d) After these consultations, the dates for the 11th SAARC Summit have now been set for 4, 5 & 6 January, 2002.

(e) Not applicable.